

Infinite Possibilities
?

The

VOL. 48 ISSUE
3



FLASH

Student / Reader
Adventurer

Omen-a-venture

A choose your own adventure story

Find out
we'll kick
pirate

We're
really in
the royal
Navy

BBW

Policy

The Omen is a biweekly publication that is the world's only example of the consistent application of a straightforward policy: we publish all signed submissions from members of the Hampshire community that are not libelous. Send us your impassioned yet poorly-thought-out rants, self-insertion fan fiction, MS Paint comics, and whiny emo poetry: we'll publish it all, and we're happy to do it. The Omen is about giving you a voice, no matter how little you deserve it. Since its founding in December of 1992 by Stephanie Cole, the Omen has hardly ever missed an issue, making it Hampshire's longest-running publication.

Your Omen submission (you're submitting right now, right?) might not be edited, and we can't promise any spellchecking either, so any horrendous mistakes are your fault, not ours. We do promise not to insert comical spelling mistakes in submissions to make you look foolish.

Your submission must include the name you use around campus: an open forum comes with a responsibility to take ownership of your views. (Note: Views expressed in the Omen do not necessarily reflect the views of the Omen editor, the Omen staff, or anyone, anywhere, living or dead.)

The Omen staff consists of whoever shows up for Omen layout, which usually takes place on alternate Thursday nights in the basement of Merrill in the company of a computer with an extremely inadequate monitor. You should come. We don't bite. You can find the Omen on other Thursdays in Saga, the post office, or on the door of your mod.

Staff Box: (In order of appearance)

Chloe: Cats are queens

Julia: That they are alive

Maddi: You wet your hands first and then apply the soap. You know this b/c if you do it the WRONG way, you end up having the soap be completely washed out of your palms and then you have to get more soap and that's just a waste of time and soap.

Simon: Nash is the Atlas who never shrugged

Daya: We should all love each other

Front Cover: Simon Fields

Back Cover: Simon Fields

Submissions are due always, constantly, so submit forever. You can submit in rich text or plain text format by CD, Flash Drive, singing telegram, carrier pigeon, paper airplane, Fed-Ex, Pony Express, or email. Get your submissions to omen@hampshire.edu, or Chloe's mailbox (0369)



EDITORIAL

Chloe Anne Omelchuck

In her 2009 TED talk, author Chimamanda Adichie warns us of the danger of what she calls ‘the single story.’ We create this single story, she says, when we “show a people as one thing, as only one thing, over and over again, and that is what they become [in our eyes].”

Now, there is obviously a responsibility of those who produce these stories, whether they be authors or publishers, magazines, newspapers, tv shows, or reporters to provide more than one story to the public. This is what journalistic integrity is; not just reporting the story, but all the ways in which it can be viewed. There is also, however, the responsibility that we have to investigate stories that we hear, to question them and seek new knowledge. This is why we go to college; not to know, but to explore ways of knowing. And obviously, we cannot constantly question everything we know, otherwise we would have no time to think anything for ourselves and move forward. However, that does not mean that in our own individual pursuit of a goal or cause that we can ever consider ourselves to know the full story.

Adichie concludes her discussion of the single story phenomena with the following remark: “I’ve always felt that it is impossible to engage properly with a place or a person without engaging with all of the stories of that place and that person. The consequence of the single story is this: It robs people of dignity. It makes our recognition of our equal humanity difficult. It emphasizes how we are different rather than how we are similar.”

In this age of information, it seems that it should be easy to avoid the single story, in fact, it seems nigh on impossible that such a story could exist. However, it does, for the simple reason that we do not often seek out those things which conflict with our single story. As liberals we pride ourselves on equality,

individuality, and a respect for people’s right to choose. However, it’s important that we remember that even we have limitations on who we think has the right to be heard, and we are just as guilty of denying their stories as they are of ours.

I am (as ever) speaking of our current political situation.

Anyway, I would now like to present the Omen-a-venture, a choose-your-own-adventure story of epic proportions. Personally, I have always found such adventures frustrating. They’re kind of like writing a story of my own because it feels like I have control over the plot, but then suddenly it would kill me or something for no good reason that I can see. I always go back and try out all the different scenarios to try and figure out how to live happily ever after, or at least not die. But it’s frustrating when something that I thought was the best decision ultimately lead to an unfavorable outcome, not through any fault of my own, but more likely because the author didn’t agree with me. I now stick strictly to reading or writing, not both.

However, as I contemplate the single story I realize that the choose-your-own-adventure presents to you the very paradox of the single story in a simple concept; it would be easy to read through this tale just once, but then you would miss out on all the possibilities. I would encourage you to test out all the pathways and try out something a little different. Read if you dare, and may the odds be ever in your favor!

Chloe (editrix)

You're walking over by cole and see JLash heading in.
You're going to cross paths.

Do you...

Pretend you don't see him. Go to #1 (page 4, column 1)
Give him a nod and a smile. Go to #2 (page 4, column 1)
Say hi. Go to #3 (page 4, column 1)

#1) You pass JLash, ignoring him. He looks hurt.

Do you...

Feel guilty and turn around to say hi. Go to #3 (page 4, column 1)
Feel a little bit guilty but continue walking anyway. Go to #4
(page 4, column 2)
Continue on with no compunctions and no guilt whatsoever. Go
to #5 (page 5, column 1)

#2) He seems distracted and doesn't acknowledge
you

Do you...

Say hi. Go to #3 (page 4, column 1)
Get angry and demand that he 'fight you'. Go to #6 (page 5,
column 1)
Shake it off, "haters gonna hate," and keep walking. Go to #7
(page 5, column 2)

#3) He says hi back, but you notice that he looks a
little down. Being a polite person, you ask him how
he's doing. To your surprise, he doesn't reply with the
obligatory "good," but instead groans.

"The office just called to tell me that I have someone
here to see me and I have no idea who it was. I was
in the middle of my lunch break." You make a mental
note to never try and cut pizza with the president
short. Clearly, JLash gets grumpy when he doesn't get
to eat lunch. You mumble something that's probably
sympathetic. He looks like he's about to go into Cole
but then he stops.

"You should come with me."

You stare at him, not sure if he's being serious or not.

Do you...

Say yes. Go to #8 (page 5, column 2)
Say no. Go to #9 (page 6, column 1)

#4) As you walk away you hear a soft whimper
from behind you. You turn to see JLash glance back
with tears in his eyes. He stops in his tracks and
you turn back to talk to him. Still annoyed that he
made no effort to acknowledge your presence, you
assertively ask him if he was ok. He looks up at you
with large, wet eyes, and he begrudgingly waddles
over to where you are. The next thing you know, he
has fully engulfed you in a tight squeeze. You wriggle
out your arms and comfort him with pats to the back.
He doesn't let up, so you provide him with soothing
words to comfort him. "There, there," you say.
"Everything will be better in the morning." However
vaguely reassuring your words mean to him, you
find that his grip has not lightened, and you begin to
struggle beneath his weight. Suddenly, you're forced
onto the ground with all his weight stacked on top of
you. You're pinned beneath him, and try to wriggle
out from his grasp. He hasn't said a word, but you
assume that this is a fight for your life. You feel the
warmth from his face on the back of your neck, and
feel it slowly start to dissipate. The portions of JLash's
skin that meets yours feels colder and...sick. You
manage to twist your neck where your eyes can meet
his, and with fear begin to crumble into his grasp. He
has formed into a monstrous snake, and is constricting
your body. You feel your lungs compress with every
breath, and fear is now coursing through your veins.
You struggle against his slithering body, and as the
last few flashes of life briefly burn themselves into
your memory, you begin to wonder how you came to
this point in your life. You close your eyes and let the
pressure of JLash's cold-blooded figure embrace you.
You fall silently into death as JLash consumes another
victim.

THE END

#5) Suddenly, you feel a tap on your shoulder. You turn around. JLash looks pissed. You back away quickly, but it's too late.

"Fight me!" he yells.

"What?" You gasp. You were not expecting to fight JLash today, so you left your boxing gloves in your room.

Do you...

Accept his challenge. Go to #10 (page 6, column 1)

Run away very quickly. Go to #11 (page 6, column 2)

#6) "Of course," he says. You're surprised, you had not expected JLash to accept your challenge. He reaches into his pocket and pulls out a piece of paper, then solemnly unfolds it, handing it to you. "Here are the rules and regulations surrounding Hampshire College combat challenges, please read them carefully and then sign the form."

You take it and numbly read the paper.

1. The terms and rules of all challenges must be agreed on by both combatants (as noted by signing this contract)

2. Challenges will take place in an appropriate public area as decided by the President. If the President is one of the combatants, the venue will be decided by Herb Bernstein. If the combatants are the President and Herb then the venue will be decided by blindfolding the nearest available student and sending them wandering for a period of 30 minutes. At the end of this time the location of the student will be where the challenge is held.

3. Challenges must be witnessed by at least 3 other persons.

X _____

You look up. JLash is signing his own copy of the paper.

Do you...

Sign the form and proceed to the challenge. Go to #14 (page 17, column 1)

Run away very quickly. Go to #11 (page 6 column 2)

#7) As you walk away, feeling the pangs of JLash's hate or indifference, you don't notice that you are walking into the Rhoos Rhodes House. Many of the worker members of Mixed Nuts are sitting around, a blank expression on their faces, and even though it seemed that JLash was heading into the Cole Science Center, he actually managed to teleport into the Rhoos Rhodes House. And in the center of the room, JLash shows you a hidden object, obscured as it is by a thick sheet of blue cloth. He pulls the cloth off of this object with great speed and you see a Booth with two doors, to two different portals. "To know is not enough," JLash says, "you must experience the past which you love speaking about..."

There is a red door and a green door, which one do you open?
The red door. Go to #12. (page 7, column 1)

The green door. Go to #13 (page 14, column 1)

#8) Although confused, you accept and follow him into Cole. He says nothing until he gets to his office and says "I haven't been able to use the internet in here in days and I didn't know who else to ask. I'm pretty sure the secretary already thinks I'm going senile. I might be 70+ years old but I'm not an idiot." *grumbles*

You reply "Uh, you know you have an employee for that, right? Josiah?"

Before JLash has time to look embarrassed, a purple sparkling puff of smoke appears and a man on a bicycle rides out into the office and smoothly dismounts. "I am Josiah! Internet wizard extraordinaire! I would ask you what the problem is but I believe if you check you'll find that it has already been fixed simply by my presence."

JLash stands stunned for a moment and slowly moves to his computer. He goes to type in a url and before he's even done typing the page has loaded. You go to

JLash's computer and load an episode of My Little Pony on Netflix. The entire episode is buffered as soon as you click on it. Satisfied, Josiah rides his bike straight out the window and into the sunset.

You leave JLash to his meeting with Roberta's ghost.

You find that you always have perfect wifi anywhere in the world, on any device, for the rest of your life.

You Win Life.

THE END

#9) You turn away from JLash, without anything in the way of explanation. It seems unwise to listen to him when he's in such a sour mood. As he continues into Cole behind you, you can hear him shouting: "FUCKING DOGWOOD TREE, WHY DO YOU SMELL LIKE ASS?!?!" This is followed by a kicking noise and a slamming door.

Probably, you made the right decision. But if you're not going to follow the esteemed president of this institution, where are you heading?

Go see if there's still pizza at the event JLash just left. Go to #15 (page 17, column 2)

Go ask someone in Cole about the Dogwood tree. Go to #16 (page 18 column 2)

#10) JLash's gaze pierces through your eye sockets. Could this really be happening? Were you seriously about to fight the president of a college campus? It doesn't make any sense. None of this does. But you're ready.

Do you...

Say "Fine. Are you ready for the fight of your life?" Go to #6 (page 5, column 1)

Change your mind and run as fast as you can towards the library!

Go to #11 (page 6, column 2)

#11) As you dart across the library lawn away from the incredible JLash, you briefly glance back to see him chasing after you in a full sprint. Fear floods through your body and you quickly gain speed as you head down towards the post office. You see a bike rack just outside of the entrance and tuck in behind some rad wheels. As you quietly retrieve your breath, you see him stride straight into the post office - no door opening, only glass spraying across the pavement. Out of sheer panic, you bolt from behind the bike racks and flee towards the RCC. You quickly scale the stairs and shield yourself behind the drink fridge. You peer down from the window as JLash emerges from the glass wreckage, infuriated that your ruse had worked. He seems dazed and disoriented. But you know that he has the wits of a cougar and the cunning of a grasshopper, so you turn and hop the cafe counter. The workers all gape at your audacity, but you spring into action and flip over the plate of chick chick tendies that the worker was about to hand out to a now disheartened student. You leap past the fryers and head straight for the utility closet. Closeted by Bon Appetit sanitary supplies, you warily begin to calm down. You wait for what seems like years, and by the time you start to consider coming out, you notice a strange wet spot on the floor that hadn't been there before. You take out your phone and turn on the flashlight, and slowly pan over to see that you have been squatting on JLash the entire time. Nothing can explain the wet spot, but you have ideas.

THE END

#12)

You step through the red door and the phrase: Dreaming Through Time flashes before your eyes. You have now become me: an Anarchist history nerd back home in Los Angeles.

You're laying in bed with your favorite history books: Political Influence of Queen Victoria by Frank Hardie, London: The Biography by Peter Ackroy, Homage to Catalonia by George Orwell, Anarchism and Workers Self-Management in Revolutionary Spain by Frank Mintz, and The Victorians by A.N. Wilson. You're reading a bit from each of them - opening to a random page, perusing the text for a while and then rather disloyally turning to the next book. You were having a jolly old time until suddenly you feel yourself drifting into a haze.

You're jolted awake by a person resembling an (inconceivable) combination of Frank Hardie, Albert Einstein, Doc Brown and Rick Sanchez. You are not frightened or confused, he feels like an old friend.

"Hi, my name is Frank. You want to study by day and change things by night... am I correct?" he asks.

"Well yes." you reply.

"What if I told you that you could go back into the past, and by changing what happened then, you could change the present?" he asks whimsically. You hesitate, considering the notion, and he continues talking "Well you're going to! I'll be your guide. We'll be going to Barcelona, December 1936."

"You want me, a 21 year old with my head in the clouds, to change the outcome of the Spanish Civil War?"

"Yes!"

"But how?"

"Just follow my instructions."

"But if you know what to do, then why don't you do it yourself?"

"Well," and now Frank took off his Doc Brown/Einstein/Sanchez wig and looks you straight in the face, "I want to introduce you to scholarly activism... Top hats by day, and planting the seeds of a new society at night." He put his wig back on. "And after we change enough of the past, we can enjoy it. A few vital things in the 1930s and '40s need to change, and then I'll drop you off in Victorian London for a couple of weeks."

"But I thought you shouldn't meddle with the past. I thought it was too dangerous..."

"Ah come off it. That's just what they want you to think. Mainstream historians are brainwashed into complacency. They would rather live in a world familiar to them - a world of racism, starvation and war - that they won't change the past even though they can."

"Isn't time travel impossible?"

"You underrate the potential of technology. Now close your eyes."

You follow his first instruction and close your eyes, feeling your head sinking into the pillow. Everything feels like it's changing, evolving.

Suddenly, you are now sitting in an armchair. Across from you is another fellow in an armchair. His face was keen, eager, and lean. He had a mustache, and you recognize him at once.

"You're George Orwell, aren't you?" you ask.

"How did you know that?"

"Well you're only one of the most fam..."

But Frank cuts you off. "Shut up about that! You can't go around telling people their potential future... unless it's absolutely vital to changing it. Tell George Orwell about his future fame, and his writing may never amount to anything. On the other hand, if you tell Francisco Franco how the war will end, well, that might be a bit more useful."

"Franco's going to win?" Orwell interjects. "Well at the rate that the bloody war is going, I wouldn't be surprised."

We ignore him.

"But I thought we were going to Barcelona in December 1936. At that time, George Orwell was in a completely different mood."

Orwell speaks up again "I'm not sure how you know that but you're absolutely right. To anyone who had been in Barcelona since the beginning of the war, it probably seemed that the revolutionary period was ending even in December or January..." Orwell was about to describe what the Anarchist Revolution in Catalonia was like back in 1936, "...but if you came straight from England, the concept of Barcelona was startling and overwhelming. It was the first time that I had ever been in a town where the working class was in the saddle. Practically every building of any size had been seized by the workers and was draped with red flags or with the red and black flag of the Anarchists; Every shop and cafe had an inscription saying that it had been collectivized; even the bootblacks had been collectivized and their boxes painted red and black. Waiters and shop-walkers looked you in the face and treated you as an equal. Servile and even ceremonial forms of speech had temporarily disappeared. Nobody said 'Senior' or 'Don' or even 'Usted'; everyone called everyone else 'Comrade' and 'Thou', and said 'Salud!' instead of 'Buenos dias'. Tipping was forbidden by law; almost my first experience was receiving a lecture from a hotel manager for trying to tip a lift-boy... Down the

Ramblas, the wide central artery of the town where crowds of people streamed constantly to and fro, the loudspeakers were bellowing revolutionary songs all day and far into the night... Practically everyone wore rough working-class clothes, or blue overalls, or some variant of the militia uniform. All this was queer and moving. There was much in it that I did not understand, in some ways I did not even like it, but..."

"I recognized it immediately as a state of affairs worth fighting for," you say.

"How did you know that I was going to say that?"

"Well, because I read your book, Homage to Catalonia, and you were reciting it verbatim..."

"You read it? But, it won't be published until tomorrow, the 25th."

"The 25th of what?" I ask.

"Well, of April."

"My birthday!"

"You were born in 1938?"

"No, in 1995. Well, that's how I was able to read your book. It's such an honor --"

"Yes, yes, that's right you're a time traveler. I wonder what old H.G. Wells would think if he met you."

"We don't have much time for this self indulgent chit chat," Frank interjects. "Before we go to 1936, we'll need to be very clear about what needs to be done. Mr. Orwell, please tell us what you think were the greatest mistakes made by the Spanish Republic in its fight against Fascist traitors."

"Well, time traveller," George says, turning to you "what do you think? You read my book. I'm curious, what lessons do you draw from it? How do you think I

think things should've been done differently?"

"For starters," you say unabashedly, "there were a few very different types of armies on the Republican side. There were the egalitarian militias (including the one you fought in), and there was the Soviet backed Popular Army. The Republic was so afraid of the Social Revolution in Catalonia that it didn't adequately arm the militias, even as arms were flowing to the Soviet backed forces."

"Quite right."

"The different elements of the left, POUM Anti-Stalinists and CNT-FAI Anarchists, for instance, weren't quick enough to unite as the Soviets colluded with the Republic's leaders, and with Western Powers, to slowly put an end to revolutionary developments in Catalonia. Once the Militias were disarmed, and the Worker's Patrols disbanded, it was quite easy for the reinstated Civil Police to carry out a Stalinist purge in Spain. This dampened enthusiasm for fighting Franco."

"You're even more understated than most of my fellow Englishmen." George says.

"While this wasn't mentioned in the book," and I could see George glare at me for my ungrateful impudence, "it might have been harder to justify disbanding the Worker's Patrols if they didn't include criminals who had been freed from prison, and if they weren't involved in killing innocent civilians and clergymen suspected of right wing sympathies. More should've been done at the very start to prevent these killings, we're talking about roughly 5 to 8 thousand lives that could've been saved in Catalonia alone. In the entire Republic roughly 38 thousand lives could've been saved. Perhaps some of the 50,000 to 130,000 leftists who were killed under orders by Franco and his Generals may also have been spared -- the scale of attrition may have been lower on both sides. If the worker patrols --"

Frank interrupts you to say "I've thought about this humanitarian issue. In fact, a few minutes before I woke you up, another couple of time travellers returned after saving as many people as possible from political killings. Our people went to the people before they storm the jails, a couple days before, and warned them that when they free everyone, not just the leftist political prisoners but also the common law criminals, that many, many people would die when the same criminals would join Patrols. We'll go to various places where the left prisoners were replaced by right prisoners, and we'll tell the townspeople that they must free the right wing prisoners before they learn of atrocities on the other side, so as to prevent thousands of deaths by senseless shootings of attrition. We'd have one powerful trump card -- the credentials of a time traveler, the ability to say that you know the future and you know how one thing connects to another. An ability, no doubt, which you'll be honing as you encourage Caballero [Prime Minister of Republican Spain] to recognize the Independence of Spanish Morocco,"

"What?" you say.

George explains, slightly irritated. "You didn't read one of the most important parts of my Homage: some of the fiercest, best trained of Franco's troops were from Morocco. If the Spanish Republic had the temerity to recognize the Independence of Spanish Morocco, without spending too much time worrying about French-Soviet relations, well, Franco could've had a massive insurrection to deal with in his rear-gard. Soldiers may've been diverted to deal with it, either Spanish or Moroccan. In the meantime, perhaps in response to suppression of Moroccans back home, there may have been mutinies, defections, amongst the Moroccan fighting corps. You see, it could've changed the course of the whole war!"

The chair changed in shape, as did the entirety of the room which took on a far more elaborate, stately appearance. There was a desk, and a Newspaper on it, with the date, September 4th, 1936. The Headline was

in Spanish, of course.

“Bien,” says the fellow sitting behind the desk. He had a gray receding hairline, and a good neck tie. I could see an English subtitle, “Well,” and I continue seeing the subtitles, in yellow. “You are the time travelers, of course. The time travellers from a few months ago did a splendid job of saving innocent lives. They were tireless in their work. I am Francisco,” and here I shuddered at the name Francisco, Franco’s first name. But this man isn’t dressed in Military garb. “Francisco Largo Caballero, the new Prime Minister of the Republic of Spain.” He continued talking, but there was a bit of a lag in the subtitles. “Que? Estas escuchando?” I stare at Caballero’s collar, dumbly, waiting until I see the words, “What, are you listening?” “Oh sí, perdóname por favor Damn subtítulos.” Thud, thud thud. The war-front was very close to the Capital, and we could hear it a little too close for comfort.

Caballero and the fellow next to him, who looked like a picture I saw of Companys [President of Catalonia] (apparently visiting Madrid) chuckled at my poor Spanish. Caballero leaned forward, and the subtitles said, “how can we expect you to help us if you can’t even speak our language?”

“Bueno pregunta,” I say.

“Go on,” Frank says, “you can speak in English they’ll understand. They can see the subtitles.”

“Perdoname Ingles, por favor. Frankly, gentlemen, I am from the future. In the future, we remember the Spanish Civil War with sadness about the bloodshed, the dashed promise of change in Catalonia, and the triumph of Franco. In my timeline that triumph occurs in three years. BUT YOU HAVE THE POWER OF PREVENTING IT! The two greatest priorities must be to recognize Spanish Morocco, encourage insurrection within the Fascist Insurrection -- both in Morocco and in the ranks of Franco’s Moroccan Troops. Take the greatest asset of the enemy and turn it into their

greatest liability.”

“Yes, but what about France?” Caballero asks.

“Blum, the President of France may not be happy about Liberating Spanish Morocco. But he also knows that Nazi airmen are dropping bombs for Franco, and I can’t imagine him changing his Center Left Governments’ neutrality. The real problem with France is that they may not be as happy with Joe Stalin since they see Republican Spain as his proxy but the fact is, nobody should be. The man’s a monster you’ll need to look out for. He’s got NKVD Agents here in Spain. He’ll try to take over the Republic, stuff the revolution in Catalonia, and in May ‘37 his purges, carried out in your country, against people on your side, will take some of your best people away from the war effort, and devastate morale. Not to mention, Prime Minister, that the very same May, you’ll get kicked out and replaced by Negrín. I know you’re afraid of the Anarchists and their patrols,” I say, turning to Companys, “But the time travelers before me have shown that the patrols can be tamed, and in my timeline, when they are disbanded, the purges began, and it was a major turning point. At any rate, you’ve got to recognize Moroccan Independence, send in agitators, and pamphlets to stir things up behind enemy lines. In the meantime, you’ve got to distribute your arms more evenly. In my timeline, many militiamen fight with guns from 1896, if they have guns.”

“Ay sí. Guns that were probably used in the Spanish American War.”

“Yes, I know that shouldn’t have ever happened either. Very sorry about that. Pointless -- one oppressor for another. You know, it all reminds me of a different Civil War though. In the American Civil War, Lincoln ‘proclaimed’ slaves free, in the Confederate South. He didn’t have the power to free them. Many of these slaves chose to free themselves, escape to the North and fight for the Union. And indeed, Lincoln didn’t issue his proclamation for moral reasons. He’s

remembered poorly for his lack of moral motivation, for making it a war measure. But from a military standpoint, what would've happened if he hadn't done that? Half of the U.S.A. may be known as the C.S.A. for all I know. Your predecessor as Prime Minister has been fighting this with one hand behind his back. Actually with two."

"Ah yes, what's the other hand?" Companys asks.

"Well, you haven't been arming the militias adequately."

"Yes but when the Russians send us their arms, and they are due to, they expect it to be going to the soldiers they like... What if Stalin decides to send us fewer arms?"

"If he does then he won't gain as much of a foothold, you won't be overthrown..."

"Yes but what about Franco? Thou keeps speaking of Stalin this, Stalin that, etc. But where do we get arms to fight Franco without the Soviets?"

"There are many possibilities. There is the chance that the agents riling things up in Spanish Morocco can smuggle arms out of Moroccan depots. There is the chance that the insurrection within Franco's revolt can divert resources from the front line, there is also the chance that Moroccan soldiers -- among the fiercest carrying the Falange Banner will defect and bring their guns and their skills with them in service to the Republic that would liberate their country. Poland and Mexico will probably continue selling you weapons. Other countries may send in their weapons to your side when they see less Soviet proxy power -- they may want to fill in the vacuum and defeat Fascism."

"Possibilities! May! You want us to go off of that? You don't speak our language, you know nothing of our daily struggle, and you come in here with possibilities?" Companys seemed quite upset. "You're just like all of the other starry eyed idealists!"

"Aye, but there is one major difference. I know with certainty, with absolute certainty that under the present course of action, the Republic will lose within three years. Franco will rule Spain from 1939 until his death in 1975 -- in the current course of action, a civil war within the civil war will weaken you while Carlist, Nationalist, Falange and Moroccan factions unite, and press you on all fronts, until they defeat you. This is what will happen if you carry on in this way. On the other hand, if you limit Soviet influence, preempt a civil war within civil war on your side, and instigate one behind Fascist lines, you stand a far better chance of winning. That is all that I know."

"But how do we know that you really come from the future?" Caballero asks mildly. Companys was a little more hostile when he added, "And that you aren't just part of Franco's Fifth Column -- that you aren't simply trying to trick us into losing Soviet support and antagonizing the French into fighting us?"

This time it was Frank's turn to speak. "We brought several things with us. For instance, for an in depth account of the war, from December of this year till the Spring of '37, here is a copy of Homage to Catalonia en Espanol. You also might find various newspaper clippings interesting. They track the events leading up to the demise of the Republic," after practically throwing the papers in Companys' direction, "and here are some articles about life in Franco's Spain. Oh, and here's a book about Franco's war and post war atrocities, called Spanish Holocaust. You can look at the dates, and the references all you want..."

Caballero and his cabinet spent a few days deliberating over what to do, and on September 10th, the Spanish Republic proclaimed Morocco free. On the eve of the announcement, agents were sent to French Morocco to recruit other agents to go into Spanish Morocco and begin stirring up trouble -- not that they were necessarily needed. The Spanish Republic passed a law on October 2nd, 1936, providing that arms procured by other countries would be "equitably and

proportionately distributed to all Unions, Parties and Militias that can fight Franco's treasonous Fascist Insurrection." In the run up to that bill's passage, as Frank and I spent the week days in Madrid convincing Republican politicians across the spectrum that this would be necessary, and to watch out for Stalin, we also went spent the weekends in Barcelona, to remind ourselves of what the whole thing was about in the first place. It wasn't just stopping the advance of a regime which would prove a strange and brutal hybrid between the Feudal Middle Ages and Fascist Modernity, but also protecting a society as it advanced further and further into the light of democratic control by working people than any other industrialized society in history. And as the people of Catalonia consolidated their power, and as the people in Morocco began demanding their own liberation, a third prong in Frank's grand strategy to defeat Franco was being implemented in Washington D.C. Two other time travellers were meeting with President Roosevelt, and telling him that in our timeline, the Loyalist Republic lost, in part because his Administration would simultaneously say that it's hands were tied by the Neutrality Acts of 1935 while allowing arms sales to Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany. The time travelers didn't only remind Roosevelt that those arms were often helping Franco, but they also informed him that under the current course of action, Franco would win, and eventually, the U.S. would be fighting Hitler and Mussolini. When Frank was informed that the Arms Sales were stopped I was ready to jump for joy. I could hear "A Las Barricadas" playing from Speakers in Las Ramblas, and see CNT FAI workers marching down the street, wearing their overalls, their red and black bandanas around their necks, and their proud red or red and black hats. Red, yellow and purple flags of the Republic were being waved alongside the Red POUM flags and the Red and Black CNT FAI flags. Frank did draw my attention to a few PCE and PSUC (Stalinist) flags with hammers and sickles which did a little, but only a little to dampen my sense there was so much hope in the air.

The rest was a bit blurry, I suppose. After the bill had

been passed, we spent three final days in Barcelona in October; there was a whirlwind of color and good news. Frank was constantly traveling between different times, to see how future battles of this war would end, and how other somewhat unrelated efforts to transform the past were going. The news in the short term and the long term was looking pretty good. It seemed partly because of where the battles were being fought. There were fewer sieges on the Republic's strongholds in Madrid or Malaga, and there were more and more sieges on Nationalist strongholds, especially those in Southern Spain where it seemed the Nationalists were getting weakened most effectively. I learned that Cordoba would fall by June 1937, and that Seville would be the next besieged Fascist city. The next day there was even better news, as Frank told me about how other time travelers were convincing FDR to take a more active role in overriding his State Department's efforts to keep Jewish Refugees out of the country. He told me about how the people aboard the St. Louis had been allowed in, and how Roosevelt would be informed of what Einsatzgruppen Squads were doing during operation Barbarossa. His task force involved in the preservation of artwork stolen by the Nazis was only half the size of a task force of operatives who would be involved in giving passports to Jews, smuggling them out of Europe (especially through countries which were not part of the Third Reich in 1941) freeing Ghettos and bombing the tracks to Concentration Camps. By October 17th, 1936, as I was in the middle of getting my hair cut by an Anarchist barber in a CNT-FAI shop, Frank began whispering that the timeline had been altered so vastly that the Republic would win the Civil War by February 1940; that at least half of the Jews, Romani, Gays, Political Prisoners and disabled who had died in the Holocaust in my timeline would survive it in this new past. He started naming family members who would never be killed. I was crying mindlessly in the barber's chair, until he mentioned a Slovak by the name of Bela, my grandmother's first fiance. (I was still crying at this point, but the muscles in my body were growing tense). You see, Bela was a man who was murdered by the Nazis in 1942. The second he

mentioned Bela's name, I glanced down at my numb hands as they began to fade away into the chair. The little I could see of my nose also seemed to disappear.

Just before fading into oblivion, Frank said, "Oh well. So much for showing you the marvels of Victorian England. Time's a tricky thing to mess with; and now I supposed you've learned your lesson."

"MY LESSON! I was the one who was against changing the past!"

"Why? This time it all worked out. The Anarchists keep control of Catalonia, the Republic beats Franco, and in another timeline, millions of men women and children are spared hideous deaths! So what if that means you can't exist?"

"I, er, I," I stammer, trying to unpack a multitude of philosophical, ethical and practical issues (chief among the practical being my existence) as I disappear into the chair, and a perplexed barber runs out of his shop fearing he's gone stark mad.

I briefly slip back into my bed in LA before I become you, and blink at JLash.

"What was that?" You ask him.

"I told you, a journey through history," JLash replies. You just stare at him, dumbfounded by the bizarre nature of what you have just experienced.

"That's not really what I meant. Why did I become an Anarchist history nerd in Los Angeles?"

JLash looks at you like you're crazy. "That's easy. Everyone knows that in order to transport someone through time they must take on the true persona of the person that is transporting them." You look at him like he's crazy. "Your true persona is an anarchist history nerd from Los Angeles?"

"Of course, that's why I'm here at Hampshire, to

pursue my true calling."

"But aren't you retiring?"

He looks at you like you're crazy. You wonder how many times you can look at each other like that. "Why would I ever do that? Hampshire is the foremost Anarchist institution in the country, it's the perfect place for me." You suddenly realize that JLash was justified in thinking you were crazy; you actually changed history.

THE END

#13) The Green door

After going through the green door, you suddenly find yourself falling into a memory. Or is it a dream? You're not sure, but all you know is that suddenly you're looking through someone else's eyes, hearing their thoughts as if they were your own, and remembering something that you've definitely never done...

Once Upon a Time, in lands far too close for comfort, I took the Tour of Hope at the appropriately named Aspirations Park. The tour guide was a bit of an odd duck. He was wearing a deerstalker hat, a cape, and everybody on the tram could see his keen, energetically excited, sadly knowing face on their screen.

"Hello everybody. Who am I, you ask as you board the tram? Well, my name is always changing as I discard heroes and find new ones. At the moment it might be Thomas-Daniel- A. Phillip-Paine- Martin-Pierre- Randolph- Proudhon- Bacon- King. We try to keep things nice and playfully self righteous in this park. It's the only way we keep our spirits up. Okay, I'm glad that's over with. I hope you've all had a very pleasant day at Aspirations Park; your tours of Candy Land, Money Mountain, your inevitable diversions to swan boats going through canals, and various other places including the Argument Clinic and the Haunted House of Reality in the Present Day are nothing, NOTHING, compared to this tour. In fact, if you want to understand the inner workings of the Haunted House of Reality, I'm really afraid you'll have no other choice but take the tour. In fact, whether you want to or don't want to, you are on the tram and our helpful assistants are bringing the doors down. Which reminds me, remember to keep all hands, arms, elbows, let's see I need to look at my list: feet, knee caps, belly buttons and chins inside of the vehicle.

This tour will take you to America, Britain, America again, Jamaica, Hungary or Germany, (or both if I'm

particularly ambitious) and then back to this spot. All in under an hour, you understand. In fact, I think we're on a particularly tight schedule today, so we'll try to keep cover everything slightly adequately in the next 45 minutes. What's that? Oh come now [speaking into an out dated walkie talkie with someone none of us could see] you can't possibly expect this to take half an hour. Nobody ever learns anything in half an hour.

Please excuse the interruption folks.

Okay, well our first stop is America 1775."

I was relieved to hear this disconcertingly ambitious person stop talking when the tram lurched backwards, at top speeds.

"Right, well there were different American Revolutions which were all going at once. There were, you'll agree, a multitude of factors motivating different participants on all sides. It wasn't all Liberty, Republicanism, Democracy and a neatly waving flag with Thirteen Stripes and a Union Jack in the top corner -- in 1775 it was still a Union Jack, not a blue corner with white stars as yet, because you see, well that's a whole other matter that isn't important. Now here you can see farmers getting warned by Paul Revere and a bunch of other people that "the Regulars are coming!" Not the British are coming, you understand, because they were all British. Oh yes, that's why the Union Jack was on the flag. Right, well, the hopes and dreams of New England Farmers like the lads you see running to fetch their Brown Besses and those of many Boston tradesmen in Revere's class are fairly "Democratic". They had jeered at, tarred and feathered tax collectors, magistrates, and other Royal Officials of His Majesty's Government, in order to restore a quasi inclusive form of direct democracy in the Town Hall. These sorts of radically democratic ideals would also inspire Pennsylvanians -- from the farmlands of Appalachian backwaters of the colony, to establish a State Constitution extending to all freemen over the age of 21, regardless of property ownership. (Let us not forget, however, that Pennsylvanians who

were considered property, whether wives or slaves, did not have the vote).

Now it is time for us to fast forward to November 14th of the same year.” The tram went swiftly forward for about three minutes. “Do you see that prominently dressed lobster back with the kilt? That’s Lord Dunmore, who just issued America’s first Emancipation Proclamation. He promised freedom to any slaves who would fight for the British Empire. Some 80,000 slaves escaped their “Patriot” and “Loyalist” owners to fight for King George. Others would be inspired by Revolutionary rhetoric to fight for the notion that all men are created equal. In the meantime, all tribes in the Iroquois Confederacy were fighting for the British. All but the Oneida. But they weren’t doing this because they didn’t subscribe to egalitarian notions -- in some respects their society was more egalitarian and democratic than ours. The Iroquois tribes decided to fight for King George because his Proclamation Line of 1763 halted westward expansion (much to the chagrin of the previously mentioned egalitarian Pennsylvanian farmers).

America would gain its Independence, but the farmers who started out fighting in Lexington and Concord or drafting Pennsylvania’s Constitution or acting as “Regulators” in North Carolina would be defeated at the other Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia, the famous one that occurred in 1787. In fact, one major reason that it, er, convened was that understandably angry farmers in Western Massachusetts were stirring up trouble again. Slavery would be institutionalized by the 3/5ths Compromise. And White “settlers” or “conquerors” would continue encroaching on Indian Land until they spread from Coast to Coast, and until the Native Americans are confined to Reservations (and only a few of which might strike it rich in the gambling business.) Alright, time for us to fast forward to Britain, 1832!”

And my goodness were the forward motions quick. Sparks shot off from the tracks, and before we knew

it, we were in Britain. “Right well do you see all these people at the Manchester Town Hall? They’re all proclaiming that they should have the vote, that the Great Reform Act now being debated in Parliament would give them the vote. They’ll get their way. The bill will be passed. But only one in seven will get the vote. The British franchise wouldn’t be extended to all men until 1884, and it wouldn’t include all women until 1928. By then nearly a century will have passed, and no doubt the poor men and women in this room will have been dead! Most will never cast a ballot. Right, well the next thing that happens here in Britain will be the abolition of slavery. The Brits were quicker on this issue than the Americans. Slavery would be abolished throughout the Empire by 1834, and loopholes in that law will be closed by 1843. But in the meantime, let us go to Jamaica to see what this event was like.

And instead of going forward, the tram merely moved West until we found ourselves surrounded by a tropical Caribbean Climate. There were palm trees, the air was moist. “You know, the ways of the Deep South started out here? South Carolina was once known as ‘Carolina in ye West Indies’ which is what these Caribbean parts are called. The West Indies. Right.” Clearly the tour guide was doing this to score well on some test his cruel grad school had inflicted upon him, or perhaps he was just a show off. “Right well it’s August 1st, 1834. Rumors are circulating that a pronouncement will be made, declaring all slaves free. It’s been two years since the Baptist Slave Rebellion, emancipatory legislation passed in Parliament: Indeed, that pronouncement is to be made, but in the ‘transition’ to freedom, slaves will be ‘apprentices’ to their former masters until 1838, when they will be fully free. As you can see, the slaves being informed of this by colonial officials are warily reluctant to rejoice. Right, well it’s already been 45 minutes. Really quickly then, let us go to America in 1865.” And the tram moves forward and slightly Northwest so quickly it isn’t even worth describing.

“Well, it’s December 6th 1865 and the State of

Georgia has just ratified the Thirteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. Slavery has officially been abolished. Everyone cheer to the tune of the Battle Hymn of the Republic. ‘Glory, glory hallelujah, glory glory hallelujah, glory... Hang on, something else happens this year, in Jamaica. You know, no more of the tram gimmick, but to make a long story short, a bunch of freedmen in Jamaica marched in protest of high poll taxes. Violence broke out, and the Governor General of Jamaica -- Edward Eyre declared Martial Law. He went on to order his soldiers to hunt down the “rebels” and 400 black men women and children were murdered in cold blood.

Did I mentioned that the South was modeled after the Caribbean? It would follow similar patterns. Well it would, but since we’ve only got five minutes we can’t go about retelling the story in the way most of you are already familiar.

Let’s see, now let us go to 1945.” And this time the tram did speed forward until we reached the destination. Jewish, Romani, Gay, and political prisoners are being liberated from Concentration Camps. They have suffered unimaginable burdens, hoping for this moment. For the war to end, for them to survive the Nazi terror. Many would still die, however, of Typhus in the Displaced Person’s Camps. One of the prisoners who didn’t die of Typhus, Hedy Flesch, is dancing with some people in the DP Camp. She meets a black man for the first time, and dances with him -- possibly unaware that he fought Hitler and wound up returning to roughly two more decades of Jim Crow. She’ll say what many other survivors said, “Never Again,” but the remaining years of the 20th Century would witness Democide in China, and Genocide in Cambodia, East Timor, Rwanda, Bosnia, Darfur and various other places around the World.

All of the people you have seen have basic aspirations. They aspire to political equality, or at the very least, not to be enslaved, or at the very least, not to be murdered en masse for their identities or beliefs. Simple aspirations. And they have seen the World

slowly move towards those aspirations but we often think of moments when everything suddenly shifted in their favor. When people were enfranchised, liberated, or spared from butchery. And yet, history rarely stops at those moments. There is a constant struggle, back and forth, to and fro, and we must learn from how the pendulum once swung to keep it swinging towards our hopes and dreams as often as possible.”

You wake up and then open your eyes to find JLash standing a little bit to close. You shriek and fall backwards onto the floor.

“What was that?” You ask him.

“I told you, a journey through history,” JLash replies. You just stare at him, dumbfounded by the bizarre nature of what you have just experienced. “Congratulations,” JLash says, holding out his hand. You clasp it and he pulls you to your feet, surprisingly strong for a man of his age. “You have completed your requirement for historical understanding.”

“What’s that?”

“A new divisional requirement we’re testing out.” He holds out a piece of paper and you take it. It’s a coupon for Mixed Nuts. “This is in appreciation for your assistance in testing our systems.” He picks the blue cloth up off the floor and drapes it back over the doors. You look around, everyone is still frozen.

“Okay, I guess I’ll be going then.”

Once you escape the Rhoos Rhode house you turn around to see if everyone is unfrozen yet. They have, and JLash is standing back over by the entrance to Cole, trying to look innocent. He’s clearly waiting for another unsuspecting student to walk by. You shudder and walk away, not sure if your journey through history should make you hopeful or depressed.

THE END

#14) You sign the paper and hand it back to JLash. The instant that he has both papers in his hand, Herb walks out of the building. He's wearing a Hawaiian shirt and a beret and is moving faster than you've ever seen him go. He quickly walks up to you.

"Finally, a student who has enough nerve to challenge the President. What form will your challenge take?"

"What are the options?" You ask. You had assumed that you would just fight it out or something, but now you're a little curious.

"Anything," Herb says, "I always encourage combatants to make their own selections, to be creative with their combat."

"But you must have seen quite a few of them," you cajole. "What have people done in the past?"

Herb looks pleased you asked. "Historical tests have included poker, lifting food from saga, aikido matches, juggling, poetry slams, and, of course, a brawl."

"I'm no good at juggling," JLash says, "and I've never studied aikido. Poker seems boring." He turns to you.

"Which one do you want to do?"

Do you reply...

- 17. Lifting food from saga (page 19, column 1)
- 18. Poetry slam (page 21, column 1)
- 19. Brawl (page 22, column 2)

#15)

You turn and head towards saga. JLash is no longer at pizza with the President, but they should still have the pizza. And since JLash was gone, you don't think they'll mind if you just take some and split. It's a really beautiful day outside and you inhale deeply. It's the perfect kind of day to sit outside with some pizza.

Strangely enough, you see JLash standing around looking guilty as you walk into pizza with the President. If you didn't know any better you'd say he looked like a student trying to steal food from saga. However, he makes no move to stop you as you collect your pizza and leave. You go and find a spot over by the Yurt to sit. From inside you can hear the sounds of loud voices, not raised like fighting, but as if making a speech of some kind. You surreptitiously look in the window and see that there's actually a large crowd of people in there, another student and... JLash? You shake your head. You know you're not mistaken this time. There's no way that JLash could have gotten from saga to the Yurt without you seeing him. At the same time, you don't see how he couldn't have. It wasn't like he could be two places at once. Unless he has a twin, but that would almost be creepier. How could the student body not have known that JLash had a twin?

You sit down and eat your pizza meditatively. You're just finishing the last bite when you see a crowd of people gathering over on the library lawn. Curious, you walk over and see that there is a student and... holy crap! JLash again! You turn around and sprint back over to the Yurt and look in the window. Sure enough, JLash was still there. You sprint over to the fighting circle, where JLash looks like he's winning. You sit down heavily.

"Are you okay?" says a voice behind you. You turn around. It's JLash. You gasp and rise quickly to your feet.

"What's going on?"

"What do you mean?"

“How can you be...” You gesture wildly, “in all these places at once?”

“You can see me fighting?” JLash asks, looking surprised. You nod. “My true identity is the nexus of the Omen-a-venture,” JLash says.

You stare at him. “The what?”

“You know, that choose your own adventure story that the Omen wrote. Most people believe that it’s simply a quirky invention of the Omen staff’s strange minds, but in reality they’re telling the truth. As the nexus of the Omen-a-venture I live all the separate story lines and am the reason that they diverge.”

Your head hurts, you’re not sure if you can tell what he’s talking about. Maybe multiverses? Parallel universes? Or is it travelling back in time over and over again and changing events each time?

“But why are you in many places at once?” You ask. JLash frowns.

“That actually shouldn’t happen,” he pauses, gives you a surprised look, then smiles. “I know why! You’re my successor! The next nexus! That’s why you can see all the different plots.”

“Wait, what do I do if I’m the nexus?”

“It’s really fun!” JLash is practically bouncing up and down. The real JLash is very different from what you were expecting. Perhaps the one you thought you knew before was just a character in one part of the adventure. “You get to make up all these different story lines and then you tell the Omen staff and they feed you pizza!”

You sigh, clearly JLash’s enthusiasm for pizza isn’t something that he was pretending about. The man was a pizza junky. But you have to admit that being the nexus of the Omen-a-venture actually sounds like a lot

of fun.

“Do I have to do anything?” You ask.

JLash shakes his head. “Nope! You’re already the nexus, you just have to start making timelines!”

You smile, this will be fun.

THE END

16: You turn in a large circle and enter Cole through one of the side doors, deciding that’s probably safer than following right behind JLash. But you must know why the dogwood tree smells the way it does. Something drives you, pulling at the very fabric of your being, drawing you inexorably towards an answer to JLash’s offhand, angry remark.

As you wander along the second floor of Cole Science Center, your heart skips a beat. You hadn’t dared to dream that you would be greeted with this, but there it was, hanging on Sarah Steely’s door: “Ask me about the dogwood tree!”

You practically run through the door, plopping on to the couch. Sarah looks at you, confused for a second, but then recognizes the burning inquiry in your soul, and knows it can only be one thing.

“Yes! Let’s do that. I’ll help you figure out who to put on your committee, and we’ll get your paper published. Ever since I heard JLash screaming about the dogwood tree for the very first time, I’ve been waiting for someone to come to me with that look in their eyes.”

The rest of your time at Hampshire is consumed with endless research, long nights spent pipetting samples of compounds from the dogwood tree back and forth. You develop blisters on your hands from gripping the pipette - but it’s all worth it. You publish dozens of groundbreaking papers and leave a permanent mark on the field of organic chemistry, founding an entire new field of study dedicated to dogwood trees.

In your twilight years, you return to Cole Science Center and sit on the ground under the dogwood tree, the smell of rotting fish wafting down upon you. Leaning back against its trunk, you close your eyes for the last time. The smell from the tree masks the scent of your decaying body, and it's never found - you spend the rest of eternity lying under the tree that propelled you into greatness.

THE END

17.

“Lifting food from saga.” You say quickly. You try and hide your glee. This is exactly the kind of contest that you could totally own. You’ve stolen more food from saga than any of your friends. You’re the one who gets sent saga shopping most often. YOU ARE THE LEGENDARY STUDENT WHO STOLE AN ENTIRE FIVE GALLON TUB OF ICE CREAM.

JLash looks somewhat pleased as well. You experience a little flutter of panic. What if JLash doesn’t get caught because the saga workers will let him get away with anything he wants? But before you can spend too long dwelling on it, Herb begins to set out the guidelines.

“You will be judged on the amount of food you smuggle out of saga in total mass. If a saga worker stops you, you immediately lose the challenge. You may not use physical violence to escape from saga. The time limit is until 9pm tonight. You must be back here at Cole by 9pm with all of the food or else you will be disqualified. If you bring back food from anywhere besides saga you are disqualified. Who will witness the weighing?”

“Well, someone’s going to need to eat all the food. We should just have a picnic.” JLash says. You snort. He’s clearly hungry. One who thinks with their stomach shall never survive saga. But you don’t see any problems with the idea so you just nod.

“Now, what are the terms of the win?” Herb says. You look at JLash, unsure of what Herb is talking about.

Then it occurs to you that you have to decide what you win if you win.

“Winner gets pizza once a week for a year, loser has to eat it with them when they ask.” JLash says eagerly. You stare at him for a moment. You hadn’t realized how much JLash really likes pizza with the President. You shrug. You’re bad at thinking up stuff on the spot and free pizza’s always good.

“Okay.”

“Then, begin!” Herb says. JLash walks into Cole, Herb close behind him. You turn around and thoughtfully regard FPH, behind which, you know that saga is waiting. It is currently 12:30 pm. You decide to hit saga right now so that you can camouflage in the saga lunch crowds.

Having not originally being prepared to steal food from saga, you find yourself entering the dining commons with only your body. Luckily, the coat you chose to wear that day has plenty of pockets, but even that won’t be enough for the amount of food that you estimate you could safely sneak out of the liberating doors of saga. Whatever, it’ll have to do. It’s good enough that you chose to go to saga early. Perusing the lunch options, you see that you’re in for a doozy - sloppy joe meat, roasted veggies, spaghetti, and pizza.

“Shit,” you mutter as you realize that you really have no container for this food whatsoever. Out of all the days they choose to have loose items, it’s today. Your doubts are overcome by your desire to win, so you start to strategize. You grab two cups, fill each with water, grab a plate and a fork, and start shovelling food onto the plate. With a pile of sloppy joe and spaghetti, you walk to the back room of saga. Thankfully, there were a plethora of students eating, so you are able to find a secluded table in the back where the crowd can cover your presence. You quickly set your stuff down and chug both glasses of water.

You casually look up, leaning back in your chair while really looking out for saga workers who might

take issue with your mission. The only saga worker in sight is adding some lettuce to the salad bar area and is not watching you. You look around in your pockets and smile when you find some string. You pull it out and lay it on the table. Swiftly, you take the spaghetti and dump half of it into one cup then take the cup and hold it between your knees under the table. You take a few napkins and put them over the top of the cup, wrapping the string to keep them on. You carefully set it in one pocket of your coat. You do the same with the other half of the spaghetti in the other glass and put it in the opposite pocket. You still have some string left. You eye your coat, wondering if it might be long enough for a little bit more food. You put the string around your neck and decide that it's long enough. You get up and walk over by the bagels, keeping an eye out for saga workers. Selecting a cheese bagel you put it in the toaster. When you go back to tie up the top of the bag you wrap the string around it then do the same with the other end of the string to a different bag. You slide the bagel bags off the counter and they hang at the sides of your body. You quickly close your coat, buttoning it up. You look a little bit buldgy, but your coat does a good job of smoothing out the lumps. You walk slowly back to the table, not wanting to dislodge the bagels. You carefully pick up the sloppy joe and wrap it in a napkin, discreetly holding it at your side at you drop the plate off at the window. You walk out the door, successfully escaping saga. You breathe a sigh of relief.

You hurry back to your dorm and start to plan. Your lunchtime foray was just the beginning. You still have dinnertime to collect more food. You wonder how JLash is doing.

As dusk falls you approach saga. You have your largest backpack on and your largest coat. The only other thing weighing you down is your laptop. You are ready to spend the full three hours of dinner sitting in saga, working, and stealing as much food as you possibly can. It's a long waiting game and difficult in the uncomfortable chairs, but you're patient. That's the true key to saga stealing success. Some of your friends find you at different points in the evening and you send them out of saga laden with food. The rules

said nothing about using other people as mules to get the food past the front desk. You instruct them to show up at Cole at 9pm with the food. A little before 7:30 you decide to cut your mission short. You've already gotten as much food on your person as you possibly can, and the later it gets the antsyier the saga workers get, wanting the students to leave so they can close up. You pack up your laptop, grab a paper towel and get one last handful of goldfish before walking out the door. The worker sitting at the front desk barely looks at you as you exit.

By 8:45 you've managed to move all of the food over by Cole and your friends are waiting with you. There is no sign of JLash. You wonder if he's been caught. At 9:00 on the dot Herb walks up to Cole. He smells faintly of chlorine and you realize that he must have been biding his time in the pool. He looks around. "The President isn't here?" He seems disappointed, as if he was hoping that there would be a little bit more of a contest.

"I'm here!" JLash shouts and you look around to see him sitting in the driver's seat of a bon appetit delivery truck. Your mind short-circuits. JLash took stealing from saga and turned it into grand theft auto. The president jumps out of the truck and walks around the back. You follow him. JLash opens the truck. Inside are hundreds of barrels of ice cream. You groan. Why didn't you think to steal a truck?

"Disqualification!" Herb grumbles. Both you and JLash stare at him.

"What?" asks JLash, his voice sounding a little squeaky.

"The challenge was to steal from saga. I did warn you both that stealing from anywhere else would result in disqualification."

You can't believe it. You've won! You and your friends climb into the truck and begin to inventory the ice cream while JLash moans on the ground. Meanwhile, Herb discreetly grabs a bag of bagels from your stash and walks back towards the pool. You pretend not to notice. Even professors need to hone their food-stealing skills every once in awhile.

THE END

18.

“Poetry slam,” you say quickly. Physical activity isn’t your thing. To your relief JLash accepts your decision without protest.

Herb looks at both of you. He slants his beret a bit, and says, “Let me just suspend an assumption of mine. My assumption is that you would like to have this poetry slam somewhere near or within the Yurt. Is that correct?”

“Yes, of course it is,” says J Lash. You wonder why this is a matter of course, but then it occurs to you that the Yurt is the best place. “Who should witness this?”

“Well,” you say, “It goes without saying that Nash M., Eugene H. and Maddie W. would have to be somewhere in the audience.”

“Isn’t Maddie somewhere in California right now?”

“Oy, well, maybe she could listen in on the radio station. In fact, everybody who can cram into the Yurt on a Friday night, with Eugene and Nash physically present would probably be best. And we’ll encourage Maddie to tune in.”

“Who decides the winner?” JLASH asks.

“Out of respect for the people who attend, the witnesses do, by vote,” says Herb. “But what would you want the stakes to be? What does the winner get in reward for performing brilliant poetry?”

“I’m not sure,” you say. “Would a million dollars suffice?”

“No that would be quite impossible.”

“No dipping into the Endowment?”

“No, no. Maybe the winner can get a free pony and a toothbrush courtesy of Vermin Supreme.”

“That works for me. I was just kidding about the Endowment,” you say.

“I hope you were,” JLash says sternly, and perhaps he feels the meaning of Non Satis Scire more poignantly than usual.

You wait, and you wait and you wait. You miraculously get Maddie to promise to listen in from across the country, and even more miraculously, you manage to get Nash and Eugene to physically attend the Yurt, along with all of the wonderfully rowdy folks there. It’s 11:30 PM. JLash is ready, you can tell just by looking at him that he’ll pull out all the bardly stops.

“I have read and written many a poem in my time. I even had one prepared for this slam, but as I entered the yurt, the famous muse of this Yurt, the Great Owen Neid, suddenly appeared. In the last moments of your riotous party, Owen inspired me to write something entirely new. I’m not quite sure how much of it is mine, for as I looked at this grand muse my pen moved swiftly across the backside of the paper, and this is what we wrote:

Pavement pounding, primal rhythm is drawn out from my heart beat in my hands gripping a faux leather interior and hanging onto the feeling of dreaming down an endlessly curving roadway. I give into the urge to explore and ignore the ones who try to stop me. Drop out, unplug, turn off, shut down, the world around me. I stop thinking and start feeling more. I imagine myself as part of the foamy crests of waves, a surfer of time, a wonderful wonderer. For the life of me, I don’t understand what’s so bad about that? I know I’m not thinking it though, I know you’re probably scared too, but sometimes not thinking it though opens your pores to feel the sunshine, and lets you hold onto something stronger. Linger, longer on the winding road and feel your body give into the seat like modeling clay, life has too much paperwork for my tastes, But you can follow your own mandated

contract, and sign the dotted line, and find your escape.”

The students are applauding quite loudly now, in fact they cheer JLash and their cheers make you succumb to insecurity and despair. You wonder how you can possibly follow up such a magnificent poem and performance, until you suddenly see Owen. Owen Nied, the great muse of the Yurt has transcended from his human form. He whispers in your ear, and suddenly, all of the words come spilling out of your mouth, and you know full well that you don’t know what you will say, but that you will say something. The words will appear, you think, as you say, “The name of my poem which is inspired by the muse,” Oh shit it’s the same muse who inspired JLash, “the poem inspired by the great muse Owen Nied,” you say tentatively, and the crowd mumbles, why is he using the same muse? But you speak louder than the crowd to announce, “it is called Missing You and The Green Grass.

I’ve been lying in bed gazing up at each individual pebble in the faux stucco ceiling above my head. The wind outside my window has merged with the low rumble of freeway trucks to form urban ocean waves. There’s always this pulsating hum, lingering. There’s the feeling of dry air outside of my nostrils that smells like musk and dying impurities. I can feel a dull ache burning and devouring my insides. What did you mean by “You’re such a sweetheart?”

My emotions bubble like a cauldron, fizzing like sour root beer. I crack my knuckles like rim shots, but feel no relief.

Advanced stillness, heavy like a lead blanket, drapes over my heart growing denser, deeper, darker. I long for when you called me by pet names and we took a long walk with our guitars in hand through wispy dandelions, taking pictures of each other in the open air.

And I was lying in a bed of green grass, looking up at a sky that was so real. Your eyes were so full of wonder, and all of it was real. All of it was real.”

You’re so busy performing the poem that you don’t quite realize how connected you’ve been to your Yurt audience. Nash and Eugene are the first to cry, of course, but soon everybody else does as well. They cry and they snap and in a dizzyingly confusing moment you are made the Bard of the poetry slam. Vermin Supreme appears, out of nowhere, boot atop his head, and says,

“Your new pony is outside the Yurt, and this gigantic toothbrush can help ensure that you can bite back, with every other red blooded, God fearing, flag waving, tooth cleaning American.” You’re a bit perplexed by the utility of a human sized toothbrush, but you seize it as your rightful prize, and the pony neighs.

Meanwhile, Owen the muse seems disappointed. “I could swear the first poem was better.”

JLash takes it all in his stride, mentioning that his original poem was about a strange encounter with Robert Redford. “I called it, the Mirror, but I don’t think it was nearly as good as the one Owen inspired me to perform.”

19)

“Brawl,” you reply with a smile. You may not be much of a fighter, but you’ve got a foolproof strategy that’s gotten you out of many a tight spot. JLash doesn’t seem to notice your delight because he just nods in agreement with your decision.

“An excellent choice,” Herb says, “what time shall we hold the contest?”

You mentally calculate how much time you’ll need to prepare. “Tomorrow at noon,” you reply. Once again, JLash seems to have no problems.

“And where will the fight take place?”

“How about out here on the library lawn? It’s the biggest open area. You see the Mythos people out

there all the time swinging around their foam swords.” JLash says.

“Will weapons be allowed?” You ask, somewhat alarmed. There’s no telling what ancient artifacts JLash has hidden away. Hampshire might not have the history of the other four colleges in the consortium, but there was no telling what secrets hid in the woods.

“No,” JLash says. “No weapons allowed. Although, should we allow protective things like gloves and armor?”

“That’s fine,” you say.

“So, noon tomorrow here on the library lawn. You should have plenty of witnesses just out walking around so I don’t think we will need anyone in particular to come. What will the winner gain?”

“The glory of defeating the other person,” you and JLash say at the same time, then glare at each other.

Herb nods, “just as a proper challenge should be. When I fought with students regularly I always fought for simple glory.”

You don’t respond, too busy giving JLash your best glare. JLash breaks away first. You turn away as well and head for the art barn, which is really where you were headed in the first place. You’ve got a lot of work to do.

The next day...

You walk from the art barn over to the library lawn, carrying the box containing your secret weapon. Some people give you a double take as they look at you. You grin. You asked one of your friends to give you some decoration to make you look fierce and you know that you are ready to win this fight. JLash is waiting for you when you arrive at the lawn. He’s brought his boxing gloves which look somewhat ridiculous when worn with his suit and tie, but you suppose that

he must look his best. Herb is waiting there as well. He’s kept his beret but now holds a megaphone. You suppose he’s something like the modern version of a herald in the old medieval tournaments. Both of them are standing within a circle of white rocks.

“Excellent!” Herb exclaims through his megaphone. The students are taking notice and a small gathering is slowly forming along the sidewalks bordering the library lawn. “We may now begin this battle. The rules are these: you may not leave the combat area, you may not use weapons, and you must obey the commands of me, the referee. Failure to adhere to the rules will result in disqualification.” You nod and JLash does as well. “You may begin when I give the word,” Herb pauses, eyeing both you and JLash before nodding. “Begin!”

JLash charges forward with a roar and you quickly step to avoid him, waiting for the perfect opportunity to unleash your secret weapon. You and JLash dance around the ring for several minutes. The students that were on the sidewalks have crowded in closer and are cheering loudly. Suddenly, JLash lunges in, too close to avoid. Now is the time! You open the box and swiftly turn it toward JLash, who punches into it, too close to avoid it. The cloud of fruit flies, disturbed from their boxy home explodes into JLash’s face. He screams in terror and staggers away from you. You help him by giving him a hard shove. He falls backward out of the ring. There is silence for a moment then the crowd begins to cheer their appreciation. They pick you up on their shoulders, stepping over the shaking JLash and carry you around for a while before setting you back down just outside the library. You look around, JLash is nowhere to be seen. All that remains of the fight is the box of fruit flies, tipped over on its side. You go over to look. There are no fruit flies left. You sigh. Now you’ll have to go and trap some more to feed your praying mantis. Then you smile. It was a small price to pay for the glory of the win.

THE END

You Have a Voice

And

It Deserves to be heard

VOTE

DIRECT DEMOCRACY

In the Online Hampshire Student Government
Referendum Tuesday April 10th through Tuesday April
17th

For More Information on what Direct Democracy would look like, Look at our
Facebook Page: Hampshire Students for Direct Democracy